



I'm not robot



Continue

Brains benton mysteries

Titles in the Brain Benton Series: 1. The Case of the Missing Message, 1959 2. The case of the forged coin, 1960 3. The Case of the Stolen Dummy, 1961 4. The case of the roving roles, 1961 5. The case of the Waltzing Mouse, 1961 6. The Case of the Painted Dragon, 1961 Over the years, the tremendous flood of mysterious and adventure books for young readers first swept irresistible throughout the English-speaking world, then receded, and eventually dwindled to a trickle. By 1960, most ongoing series, no matter which publisher, thinned out and started falling, if not entirely falling out of print. New series inaugurated around this time was usually pretty awful, as if the heart had gone out of it all. But in 1959, the Whitman company, whose regular line of books slipped downhill, perhaps even faster than most, somehow managed to come up with one last burst of enthusiasm on the part of its writers, editors and artists - the valuable result is the Brain Benton series. Not only did the series overcome the handicap of its time, it even managed to thrive past another often murdering body, a change from writers to the first story. Author of the initial book, The Case of the Missing Message, was written by Charles Spain Verral, a former pulp and aviation story writer whose career began in spinning adventure stories in 1935. For some reason, Verral bowed out, leaving the script of the remaining five stories to George Wyatt — but in testimony to the latter's skill as a writer, if you hadn't read the title page you wouldn't pick up a single clue in the text to this switch. (Editor's note: Charles Verral died in 1991 or 1992. In a letter to Fred Woodworth, Mr. Verral said that, despite the names on the later books in the series, he wrote virtually the entire series.) One of the interesting things that happened to series books during the period 1930-1960 was the progressive reduction in the age of young book heroes: some of them were, in the earlier days, over 20 - a situation that was apparently unthinkable by 1960. The Mercer Boys series by Capwell Wyckoff, began with the brothers around the ages of 20 and 21; by the time the series was reprinted around 1950, the boys had lost several years each. Ordinary series of protagonists were about 17 or 18, but by 1955 there was a definite trend towards even younger boy sleuths and adventurers. Brains Benton and his sidekick, Jimmy Carson, are younger still, and fall into the same age group the Epsteins' Roger Baxter series targeted years earlier. It is interesting to speculate on the reason for the specific ages of serial heroes, because in a sense the rationale tied with the reason for the existence of the so-called youthful genre in the first place. Series of the 1920s and '30s have characters that boys readers could look up to (to a child of eight or 16 does indeed look old, but not so old that the character is in that other dimension of existence, the Man). At the same time, such a character is old enough to do most things necessary for a hero's adventures: he can drive a car, maybe even a plane, go out at night and still be credible. Even an eight-year-old is uncomfortable with the idea of an eight-year-old aircraft pilot (and so, of course, would the passengers!). Characters in youthful stories had to be older, but just as old. A story with a 'man' was clearly to be avoided, and actually, at the same time, men were usually also excluded from central positions in the stories by the device of making young heroes parentless, a topic already analyzed at a length in the Review. Clearly there's some sort of a deeply sedative fear of the grown man either projected onto the young by the writers who tried to create this type of story for them, or remembered and called to pretend by the usually quiet-youthful writers who produce this kind of work. Given the authoritarian tendencies of adults, and especially most adult males, it's not too surprising that such stories would try to banish them from the scene, their presence interfering too weightily with the heroes' freedom. Anyway, as decades passed heroes have gone down to the 11 and 12-year-old level, and right now the old-style 17-to-20-year-old protagonist of boys' and girls' series books is all but gone. Looking back again at a moment after the Roger Baxter series, we remember that a slight mistake here was that the heroes really needed to be older; they had to get to places in a car, as they lived in a small town neighborhood and couldn't take a bus. In the Brain Benton stories, writers Verral and Wyatt got to this problem by fitting the boys a little better in their surroundings so they hardly ever need to drive or get time off from school to continue with their adventures. The necessity of privacy and liberation from parents' limitations is more or less resolved by making brain's lab a kind of private apartment where the boys partially complete projects, can hide refugees, etc. The stories are told in the first person, a rarity also among series of adventures, and the style is bright and compact: I might as well immediately explain that my name is Jimmy Carson and I live at 43 Maple Street in the town of Crestwood ... I still get goose pimples as I think of the terrible screams that came out of the spooky old Madden house, 'Cut his throat! Cut his throat! And I think I'll never forget the guy in black or the face of that monster charging across the field at us. Sometimes the ironic humour in this series approaches surreal levels, as in this scene early in Missing Message: I had just ripped up my hand to knock when the door open and I found myself looking for a strange man. Found, was naked as an egg and all bent over. But the really weird thing about him was what he was wearing. He had on a blue and white striped bathing suit- the friendly men wore in the gay Nineties with pants under the knees and sleeves midway down the arms. To top of all this, he had some up-to-date skin-diver's goggles over his eyes. He looked at me through the goggles. 'Did you brought the fish?' he asked. 'The fish!' I managed to get out. 'No... I... I came to see if you'd like to take the evening paper, the Crestwood Daily Ledger.' 'Can it be read underwater?' he eagerly asked. Crawl! It really threw me. What did I come in anyway? 'I don't know,' I said. But that's a good paper. You'll love it. I'll deliver it every afternoon. This kind of playfulness and creativity contributes greatly to the enjoyment of the series. Brainy Benton is, in a sense, a rather plausible character. Compared to those types of young geniuses in some series who whip together impossible devices at a moment's notice and go fly off to the moon—the kind of story usually written by someone who doesn't know the first thing about science or technology of any kind— Brain is what many youthful electronics enthusiasts might have been with a little more freedom and resources. The writer has a keen eye here for that kind of precocious amateur experimenter. His sidekick, Jimmy, always slightly chafed under Brains's (Barclay Benton's) technical superiority, looking for ways to surpass the intellectual boy. Both are on the outs with the local police chief, resenting their efforts to meddle in - Such meddling consisting of trying to prove that a man holding police is innocent of the charged crime, and so forth. One of the most delicious features of the series is its pageant of bright characters. There's an animal trainer traveling around with a pet seal called Oscar and his dance mouse, Xenophon; there's a freaky person hanging out in a cemetery. Credibly crooked individuals are observed in their native habitat, appropriately a real - estate agency. In The Case of the Painted Dragon 1961, a Japanese family appears, and from the prehistory of writing about them it is obvious that writer George Wyatt has more than a passing acquaintance with Japanese language and culture. In this particular story, a family's wealth was wiped out by the actions of two governments in World War II: Not only did the Americans confiscate an item of jewelry that belonged to the branch of the family in Japan; the Japanese government simultaneously expropriated everything the family owned in that country because its members dealt with the Americans - certainly a credible situation in light of the penchant for hysteria set in governments. At the same time, the last remaining members of the clan, now practically penniless, are trying to restore their valuable necklace to its side release by U.S. authorities. The aloof point of view of this story, which rises above nationalities and seemingly views the individual as the one that really matters in the infinite strife between states, has been quite impressive. The truth is, there must have been thousands of persons who were not only put at risk in the wartime harassment on both sides but hurt. As far as the series goes, this one takes on the best part of the classic stand that gave such books their flair: here were young people, EMPOWERED. They were able to discover situations, exercise their thoughts and curiosity to find answers to confusing problems. It just did them to please themselves. In certain other series at the same time, especially the Hardy Boys, the private actions of the boy detectives in police-like agencies became supposed, the boys working together and, in a sense, preceding the absorption of the lone individual in my affairs and machinery of the state. Today, it would be almost unthinkable to hear of a series containing characters who solve mysteries without some sort of quasi-official status granted compulsory by the local police department, almost as if the human spirit had given up and thanked himself to the all-consuming role of official. At the same time, they exercised responsibility toward themselves and an abstract ideal of righteousness. Maybe I make too much of the sliding away from individualism, but having just read that a new version of the Hardy Boys is about to be released later in 1986, I'm willing to predict that almost no trace of the privately-acting boy will remain here. No longer will any character even remotely resemble brain Benton reading his newspaper, get a whiff of some corruption or crime, and go out to do something about it. Instead it will be: Joe Hardy raced for the phone. Hardened investigations... Wow!... Okay, we'll get right on it! What's up? ask Frank as his brother puts the phone down. It was the CIA, joe says, thoughtful. They have word of a terrorist moving into an apartment in Bayport and they want us to put one of those new thimble video cameras in a light fixture. Right! called out Frank. He sprinted for the door. Let's go! Bibliographic information about the Brains Benton series was quickly related as there were only two varieties of formats in which the books appeared. In the earlier one, which carries the imprint of Golden Press, (just another name for Whitman; the familiar thin books for young children were produced under this name), thorns have a checked pattern, and end papers alternate the checks with line drawings of the stylized winged lion that was Golden's trademark. In the later format, end papers were of solid color, plain titles and no checkered on thorns, and of course the imprint was that of the Whitman Company. (The reason for the change is somewhat obscure: obscure, obscure, since Grosset & Dunlap had certain of his books, most notably Tom Quest, re-issued under the imprint of McLoughlin Bros./Clover Books, when in fact it was just another name for G&D. Whitman's productions are under a variety of names that seem to only add confusion to the state of affairs.) Width of the books also shrank to 5.25 inches in the Whitman imprint, from his earlier 5.75. Inside layout also kept undergoing changes from book to book, and this is perhaps the earliest series on which Whitman began printing single-color illustrations instead of the black and one-color illustrations common in his 1950s outreachers. Serial artists were Hamilton Greene, Walter Dey and Al Schmidt. The original series The case of the forged coin & The Case of the Missing Messagewere also printed in paperback as a Golden Griffin Mystery in 1969 Fan Fiction Books by Charles E. Morgan III The Adventures of Benton & Carson by Charles E. Morgan III Enjoy this collection of six action-packed short stories with Jimmy Carson (Operative Three) and Brain Benton (This edition includes three previously unpublished stories. It also includes the story of how Brains and Jimmy met and the holiday favourite, Christmas Eve in Crestwood. The internal layout and types are based by Ian Regan on the two Brains Benton 'Golden Griffin' paperback editions. Illustrated by Shannon Stirrweis. 1: The case of the carrier pigeon by Charles E. Morgan III While on a bike ride, Brains Benton (X), and his partner Jimmy Carson (Operative Three), find a wounded homing pigeon. The message the bird was carrying is missing! The Benton and Carson International Detective Agency are flying into action, finding themselves up to their eyeballs in trouble! 2: The case of the lost shoot by Charles E. Morgan III A millionaire's mansion was burglarized decades ago and the spoils never recovered. An old act could hold the clue to where the more than quarter of a million dollars is hidden. Brains Benton (X), and his partner Jimmy Carson (Operative Three), get involved in the case, and they soon find themselves in danger and intrigue to their necks. 3: The case of the stolen jewelry by Charles E. Morgan III While collecting soda pop bottles, Jimmy Carson (Operative Three) makes a surprising discovery. There are diamonds hidden in a bottle! When he reports his finding to Brains (X), the Benton and Carson International Detective Agency swing into high gear. Trying to find the jewel thieves leads them on a journey fraught with mystery and danger. Running ins with a gang of youthful delinquents leads to some hair-raising trouble! 4: The Case of the Final Message by Charles E. Morgan III This is the beginning of a new year and Brain Benton (X) and Jimmy (Operative Three) are just trying to enjoy a quiet break from school. But on their way home from sledding, they see a police car at a House. The simple case of breaking and entering turns into a staggering puzzle with hidden cues. The case takes the two operators of the Benton and Carson International Detective Agency on an adventure they take to Washington D.C and back. There's danger to the eyeballs as Brains and Jimmy get into even more of a mystery than they might even dream of. Enjoy the ride as Benton and Carson solve the case as only they can! 5: The case of the disappearing wizard by Charles E. Morgan III Mysterious Explosions at Night gets the Benton and Carson International Detective Agency on the job to investigate. The case leads Brains and Jimmy to the Crestwood Fair where they uncover a glorious plot to get away with robbing the First National Bank. Join Operative Three and Operative X on this exciting ride as the match wites with a connive wizard! 6: The case of the crossed thread by Charles E. Morgan III In this latest Brain Benton mystery, Jimmy Carson accidentally hears two men discuss a diabolical plot over the phone. Although he doesn't know exactly what's going on, he knows it's bad news! He tells Brains and in no time the Benton and Carson International Detective Agency are working in high gear! Join Operative Three and X in this exciting adventure mystery as they match wits with a criminal element that has big plans for the upcoming election! The cover art and illustrations are by Shannon Stirrweis, who was the original artist for the late 1960s paperback versions of, The Case of the Missing Message, and The Case of the Counterfeit Coin. 7: The case of the Aviator's Plans by Charles E. Morgan III It has been raining cats and dogs for days. When the rain finally subsides, Jimmy Carson (Operative Three)and Brains Benton (X) have all their courage to save a woman trapped in an angry flood! It leads the firm of the Benton and Carson International Detective Agency in one of their most dangerous cases ever! Buckle in for some high flying adventure and intrigue! Once again, Shannon Stirrweis offers the illustrations! 8: The case of the Crooked Deal by Charles E. Morgan III Crestwood Junior-Senior High School is broken into and money is stolen from the French Club! Brains Benton (X) and Jimmy Carson (Operative Three) are called in on the case. They soon find themselves in trouble to their eyeballs. Join our two private detectives in their latest mystery! 9: The case of the spy's revenge by Charles E. Morgan III Things seems to be going well for Brain Benton and Jimmy Carson of the Benton and Carson International Detective Agency, when suddenly some weird things start to happen. Things go from bad to worse when they wind up being framed for arson! Join Operative Three and X as they try one capture the most dangerous criminals they've ever encountered! Books by Scott Lockwood 7: The Case of the Courier Cat Cat Scott Lockwood Crestwood's youthful sleuths are at it again in this all new story in the Brains Benton series. Brains and Jimmy come to the aid of their most unlikely customer - their nosy housekeeper Mrs Ray! She needs the services of Benton and Carson to help save her sister from being blackmailed. But the case soon becomes more complicated than even Brains expected as the boys find themselves mixed with a mystery cat, a rival detective agency, missing pearls, a haunted house and a mad scientist. Could even the wonderful genius of Brains Benton unmask the sinister mastermind behind the entire scheme? Whatever you do, don't miss this chance to find out! 8: A scandal at Crestwood College by Scott Lockwood Jimmy's sister Ann is accused of stealing answer sheets and selling them to her sorority sisters! Jimmy and Brains are taking on one of their most towed foes in a bid to free Ann from prison. The evidence marks the head of the sorority's ethics committee, but is everything it appears to be? Join Jimmy and Brain as they take on one of their most dangerous cases in trying to reveal a sinister conspiracy aimed at one woman's rise to a position of unassatisfactory power! 9: Brainy Benton and The Drawdown mystery by Scott Lockwood In their younger days, Barclay Brains Benton and Jimmy Carson formed their own detective agency and solved many crimes. But a personal tragedy led Brains to disband the agency, apparently for good. Now, years later, he heads the bionics lab of the top-secret SwiftTech Laboratories, located in Thousand Oaks, California. But when his investigative reporter girlfriend is injured in the course of discovering the secret behind a series of mysterious bank robberies, Brain finds himself forced out of retirement to catch the mastermind behind the odd theft. Join Brains and Jimmy again as they try to stop a renegade scientist and the deadly device that can be used as a weapon of mass destruction! 10: Brainy Benton and The Case of the Other Missing Message by Scott Lockwood This is the 10th novel in the Brain Benton series of mysteries and the 2nd cross-over book to feature the famous inventor, Tom Swift. The deaths of a scientist at SwiftTech lead the investigation duo of Brains Benton and Jimmy Carson to the mysterious CEM/Anahuac corporation, run by the ruthless Sun Erato Ohm. Along with their new friend, Dr. Thomasina Swift, they encounter formidable obstacles ranging from street gangs to genetically engineered giants. Will Jimmy and Brains arrive at the answer in time to save Tom Swift Jr.se his girlfriend Phyllis Newton from certain death? Or will she be threatened by a woman who is said to have disappeared into a black hole? Don't waste a minute this latest volume in the Brain Benton - Tom Swift Jr. series and find out for yourself! Yourself! Yourself!